19: Marshall M-6 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

and the fulness tucked in at the waist line, thus allowing the action of the knees. The garment remains in place remarkably well, although no belt is used. When the women bathe—those on the plains doing so with much more regularity than their sisters in the hills—they bring the top of the skirt up under the armpits and fasten it over the breasts in the same manner as about the waist.

The jackets or smocks of the women present a variety of designs. The most common is the plain black or dark blue "hse" with little or no ornament on it. Sometimes it is decorated with small rosettes or stars of colored yarns or, among the Pwo, with fern-like figures. The prettiest decorations are made with the hard white seeds of various shapes of the plant called Job's Tears *(Coix)*. The variety mostly used are those resembling barberries, called "bwe" in Sgaw Karen and found all over the hills. These are sewed on the finished garment in parallel rows, in rows forming V-shaped figures, or in the forms of stars or rosettes and edging the arm and neck holes. Red yarns or pieces of red cloth are also sewed on to add to the ornamentation. In Shwegyin we often see a "hse" that is woven with elaborate designs of red and green on a black ground, red tape being sewed in vertical lines on the body of the garment and in horizontal lines over the shoulders. The head-dress of the women is called "hko peu ki" and among the Sgaw women consists of a piece of cloth about two yards long and a foot wide. The middle part is plain white. At either end there is a fancy woven ("u") portion about twenty inches long, red in color and crossed at intervals of two inches by transverse lines. In the middle of these colored ends is a white zigzag line representing a serpent. The other lines are in pairs, those equidistant from the zigzag above and below being alike and having their special designations. These names are, however, in archaic form, and their meaning is not well known. There are long white fringes on the ends of the head-dress and shorter colored ones at the ends of the cross lines. When worn, it is twisted about the head in such a way as to form a peak over the forehead with the colored fringes hanging down about the eyes and the long white fringes down the back. In a few villages in the Pegu Hills the women wear circlets ("hko hhlaw") of bamboo or silver, around which they coil their hair. The metal circlets are made of beaten silver a scant inch in width and long enough to go once and a half around the head, being held

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family living-room or along one side of the corridor of the village-house. The Karen loom is a primitive affair much like those to be seen among the hill tribes in Burma, the Kachin, for example, or to be found in Malaysia and the adjacent regions. The Karen loom has no frame, differing in this respect from the Burmese loom. It consists of little more than a bamboo pole five and a half or six feet long, over which the warp-threads are passed, this pole being held in place four feet or so above the floor against the back partition of a living-room, two of whose large bamboo uprights have holes in them for inserting the pole. From this support the warp extends at an incline some ten or twelve feet to the lap of the weaver, who holds it taut by means of a strap around her waist, while she sits flat on the floor with her feet braced against a section of large bamboo. The threads of the two layers are kept in place by being passed through heddles consisting of small loops attached to bamboo bars, alternate threads being thus strung on one or the other of one or more pairs of bars. On a shuttle of bamboo the filling or woof-thread is wound. It is passed by hand from side to side between the separated layers of the warp, is pulled taut, and then forced tight against the last of the interwoven threads by a piece of Burmese ebony wood, shaped like the enlarged blade of a pocket-knife. As the work progresses, the finished cloth is rolled away on the rod in the weaver's lap, only a yard or two being the product of an ordinary day's work. On the plains the younger generation of Karen women use the Burmese loom and can accomplish more with it. (See illustrations, pp. 112, 114.)

Variations in color are obtained by introducing different colors of thread. When a colored pattern is woven for a skirt or the border of a blanket, this process is called "u," meaning primarily "inserting the fingers" in reference to picking up certain threads under which the filling threads must be passed in order to produce the desired pattern.

After its removal from the loom the cloth is plunged into water and spread out to dry. Knots are tucked in and straggling ends removed, but no other finishing is thought necessary. Such cloth is very firm and almost indestructible. The width of a strip as it comes from the loom is from eighteen to twenty inches. Between three and four yards are required for a skirt. This length is cut in half. By sewing the two resulting pieces together side by side the proper dimensions for a skirt are secured. The ends of this

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larger strip, which is nearly two yards long and about forty inches wide, are sewed together, and the skirt is finished. The cloth for a man's garment is cut and sewed in much the same way.

III. Mat-Making and Basketry

The making of mats and baskets is almost wholly confined to men, who prepare the materials out of rattan and bamboo and spend their leisure hours weaving them. Common mats ("klau"), such as are used as floor coverings in their houses and to sleep on, and the large ones that serve as winnowing and threshing-floors in the hills,[1] are woven of bamboo strips about half an inch wide in checker-board pattern. The strips do not run parallel with the edges of the mat, but diagonally at an angle of forty-five degrees. The better and stronger mats are made of strips with the silicious outer surface intact, giving them a smooth and glossy appearance. The softer rush mats of Burmese manufacture are often found in Karen houses, but are not made by any of the occupants, except such as have learned the art from their neighbors.

The people distinguish between several different kinds of baskets, for which they have particular names and special uses. The large baskets ("kü") for carrying paddy and other produce from the fields to their houses are shaped like an elongated egg with a truncated smaller end and are slung on the back with a bark-fiber strap which passes over the forehead and attaches to loops on either side a little above the middle of the basket. When thus carried, the receptacle reaches below the waist and a third of its own length above the shoulders. If the bearer is heavily laden, he or she partly relieves the weight on the strap by hooks of horn or bamboo root, hung from the shoulders and supporting the bottom of the basket. These large receptacles are woven in diagonal pattern with small strands of rattan, those of the upper half being less than a quarter of an inch in width while those of the lower half are a little wider. The bottom of such baskets are square and flat, and its edges are bound with round rattans. From the corners rattan stays are run vertically to the large oval mouth of the basket, which is finished off with a large rattan around the edge. A midrib down each side from top to bottom adds strength and durability.

Cotton and vegetables are carried in loosely woven and large-meshed baskets, called "seh," meaning rough or flimsy. A man will

[1] See cuts, p. 111.